

Storheim's
GOURMET
FROZEN CUSTARD
Home of the Jumbo Hamburger
DRIVE THRU

last day

Storheim's founder dies at 67

Custard shop owner helped young workers

BY TERRY ANDERSON

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Ray Kern, the founder of Storheim's Frozen Custard shops, died Monday following a battle with pancreatic cancer.

Kern, 67, founded his first custard shop in 1984 at 106 Oakland Ave., trying to bring to the Green Bay-area the delectable custard treats he remembered from childhood in Milwaukee.

"My definition of success will be to earn enough money to pay the employees, pay the bills, make improvements and still have something left," Kern told the Press-Gazette in 1986.

Eventually, Kern and his family owned four custard

stores in Green Bay and Ashwaubenon.

Storheim's took its name from the original spelling of the maiden name of Kern's wife, Linda.

"I was a Storeim, but the original Norwegian was 'Storheim,' and we wanted something that sounded a bit more exotic. Storheim's



Kern

Custard had a better ring than Kern's Custard," Linda Kern said Tuesday.

Those four custard shops had about 100 employees, and many were young people experiencing their first taste of employment.

"I think that my husband had a positive influence on young kids, giving them advice and giving them a good work ethic," said Linda Kern.

Kern retired in 2004, after 20 years in the busi-

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ness. His cancer diagnosis came shortly after retirement.

His son, Nathanael, still owns the Storheim's Frozen Custard shop at the corner of West Mason and Taylor streets. The other custard shops were sold and are operated by new owners.

Kern was active in civic affairs and served on the school boards of Green Bay Christian School and Provi-

dence Academy.

"Mr. Kern loved custard, but more than that he loved the kids who worked for him," said Becki Wilberg, a former Green Bay resident who worked at Storheim's for four years and is now a general manager in Milwaukee for Best Buy. "I think that his custard shop was his ministry."

The Blaney Funeral Home, 1521 Shawano Ave., is handling funeral arrangements.

West Mason Street Storheim's to close

Owner considers upscale burger joint

BY NATHAN PHELPS

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Nate Kern is looking forward.

The owner of Storheim's Frozen Custard at 1860 W. West Mason St. in Green Bay said Thursday that it will close March 31, but he's got an idea in mind for an upscale burger restaurant called Storheim's II.

"If you look at the restaurant market, business — especially for high-end restaurants — is really tough," Kern said, Thursday afternoon. "But one of the growing segments is up-scale ham-

burgers for a lot of reasons.

"First of all, you can just go crazy with the best ingredients, like Kobe beef ... and still not approach the prices you're paying at a steakhouse," he said. "What I would like to do is give a steakhouse atmosphere — nice tablecloths, waitresses — but serve what is for most of Americans a comfort food."

Kern said he's looking for a property in the Howard/Suamico area. The physical aspects of the project haven't come to fruition, yet. Kern said it likely would take at least several months of work to do what he wants to do. However, the concept and direction have taken

shape in Kern's mind, he said.

"I'm not talking about \$50 burgers or anything like that, but something nicer than what you normally get," he said. "I'm excited and looking forward to being able to do it."

Kern and his brother, a chef, also have brainstormed ideas for interesting, different desserts using frozen custard.

Storheim's was founded by Ray Kern in 1984 and the West Mason shop is still owned by Nate and his wife, Jill. Ray Kern, who retired in 2004, died in 2006, according to Green Bay Press-Gazette archives.

Storheim's took its name from the original

spelling of the maiden name of Ray Kern's wife, Linda.

The west-side Storheim's building is being sold to another restaurateur, Nate Kern said.

Nate Kern said he and his father had talked about doing a different kind of restaurant — "a better hamburger place" — maybe a decade or more ago.

He is now seizing that opportunity and sees this as a tribute to his father's legacy.

"After 25 years it seems like time for a change," Kern said. "I would just like to try something different."

A Storheim's, under a different owner, is at 2276 E. Mason St.